

Imagery Analysis
North Korea's Camp No. 25, Update
June 5, 2014

Contents



Figure 1, Camp No. 25 Location Map

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March 22, 2014.

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Introduction and Analysis

Introduction

As part of a joint undertaking with the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK) to use satellite imagery to shed light on human suffering in North Korea AllSource Analysis (ASA) has been monitoring activity at political prison facilities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, more commonly known as North Korea).

This report covers activity observed during the past 12 months at the facility commonly known as *Kwan-li-so* No. 25 (Political Prison Camp No. 25) and updates HRNK's February 2013 report on the same subject.¹

For this report, ASA undertook an imagery analysis of Camp No. 25 and its environs using a 50 cm pan-sharpened multispectral satellite image collected by Airbus Defense and Space (Airbus) on March 22, 2014.

Location and Organization

Camp No. 25 is located approximately 7.5 km northwest of the port city of Chŏngjin-si in Susŏng-dong, Chŏngjin-si, Hamgyŏng-bukto (Figure 1).² More specifically, it is located on the south bank of the Solgol-chŏn (i.e., Solgol stream) across from the village of Susŏng-dong—to which it is connected by one foot and two road bridges.

Based upon previous HRNK satellite imagery reports, defector reports, publicly available information and current Airbus 50 cm satellite imagery, Camp No. 25 is an operational political prison camp. The camp and its immediate surroundings can be separated into five broad areas:

- Security perimeter
- Administrative
- Central Camp (light industrial, prisoner housing and agricultural support)
- Agricultural
- Other facilities

Physical Features

Camp No. 25 occupies an irregular-shaped area that measures approximately 1,400 by 1,000 meters and encompasses approximately 100 hectares (247 acres). The facility is served by good road, rail and power networks.

Security Perimeter

A security perimeter consisting of walls, fences, gates and guard posts not only separates the camp from the surrounding countryside, but also divides it internally (Figure 2). Neither the security perimeter of the camp, nor the wall surrounding the central compound, have changed during the past year. The external perimeter is approximately 5,100-meters-long and has four facility entrance gates and possibly three footpath entrances. All walls, fences and gates are well maintained and in good repair, as are the perimeter patrol roads.

Including the guard posts at the main gates and administrative area entrances, there are a total of approximately 41 identifiable guard posts—24 along the perimeter, eight on the walls around the central compound and nine distributed internally.³ While this is two less than identified in HRNK's 2013 report, this lower number is not significant and appears to be the result of routine adjustments made in agricultural activities around the camp. All guard posts are positioned to provide overlapping fields-of-view of the camp and are well maintained and in good repair. The absence of any vehicles along the perimeter patrol roads, or at the guard posts, suggests that guards rotate positions on foot rather than being shifted by vehicle.

Administrative

Camp No. 25's primary access road and administrative area are located on the northeast side of the camp along the Solgol-chŏn (i.e., Solgol stream). Two gates on the primary access road serve as entrances to the camp—the main gate in the southeast corner of the camp controls

¹ Bermudez Jr., Joseph S. and Farfour, Micah. *North Korea's Camp No. 25*, Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, February 25, 2013, http://hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_Camp25_201302_Updated_LQ.pdf.

² The precise national designator of this facility is unknown, so the general term *Kwan-li-so* No. 25 (Political Prison Facility No. 25), as stated by defectors, is used in this report. It is interesting to note that although the defector descriptions of this facility's mission matches that of other *kwan-li-so*, the physical characteristics observed in satellite imagery are more representative of the nation's *kyo-hwa-so*, or long-term, felony penitentiaries and prison camps. David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag: Second Edition*, Washington, D.C.: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012, www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/HRNK_HiddenGulag2_Web_5-18.pdf.

³ The identification of some guard posts is tentative. Additionally, there are several structures located within the camp perimeter that might also be guard posts, however, additional imagery and analysis is required to confirm this.

Figure 2, Camp No. 25 perimeter and guard posts, March 22, 2014.



the road leading south to Chŏngjin, while a back gate in the northeast corner controls the road to the village of Songgong-ni. On the road between the two gates are three bridges that cross the Solgol-chŏn and connect the camp to the village of Susŏng-dong. The camp and administrative area are separated from the access road by an additional two gates.

The administrative area consists of approximately 30 buildings, several monuments/memorials and a fishpond (Figure 3). Defector reports and imagery analysis indicate that the buildings are used for prison

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administration, cultural welfare, housing, maintenance and other support functions. In the past, the central courtyard for the barracks has frequently been used by guards and staff as a football pitch (i.e., soccer field). No vehicles are visible in the latest satellite image and all buildings and grounds are well maintained and in good repair.

While there have been no significant changes within the administrative area during the past 12 months, a number of improvements have been undertaken along

Figure 3, Administrative area and access road, March 22, 2014.



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the banks of the Solgol-ch'ŏn. Among these were the construction of retaining walls, removal of a temporary river ford, the grading of the land adjacent to both banks, completion of the approaches to the footbridge, construction of a park/sports facility on the Susŏng-dong side of the stream, and the start of construction on another facility of undetermined purpose on the Camp No. 25 side of the stream—opposite the main entrance to

the administrative area. The presence of three well-maintained bridges along a 600-meter stretch of the Solgol-ch'ŏn opposite the camp suggests that there is an important economic and social relationship between Camp No. 25 and Susŏng-dong.

Central Camp

The central compound consists of light industrial,

Figure 4, Central camp area, March 22, 2014.



prisoner housing and agricultural support areas (Figure 4). It is separated from the remainder of the camp by a barbed wire-topped wall with guard towers that is approximately 1,500-meters-long, encompasses approximately 13 hectares (32 acres) and has five gates.

The wood products factory consists of the factory buildings, lumber storage yard and wood chip storage areas. The central section consists of several light industrial factories and prisoner housing. The agricultural support area consists of greenhouses,

livestock or poultry pens, maintenance buildings, etc. On the western corner of the central area is a small walled-in building that has been described by defectors as a crematory. All walls, buildings and grounds are well maintained and in good repair. Both the wood products and light industrial factories appear to be operating, as is evidence by the presence of vehicles and supplies.

Immediately to the west of the agricultural support

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area is a fenced 1.74-hectare (4.2 acres) plot of land housing greenhouses. While the number of greenhouses visible at this site in the latest satellite image is higher than seen previously, this is the result of the consolidation of greenhouses previously distributed around the camp to this location.

No other activity of significance is noted within this area during the past 12 months.

Agriculture

Cultivated fields encompassing approximately 79 hectares (194 acres) are located within the camp's perimeter. While the flat land immediately north of the central camp allow for flat fields and the cultivation of grain crops, the steep terrain south and west requires terraced agriculture and is covered with orchards. All fields are well defined, maintained and irrigated, and the presence of numerous greenhouses suggests that seedlings are available for spring planting. The absence of any mechanical agricultural equipment in any imagery, including the latest, indicates that the fields and orchards are planted, maintained and harvested by hand. Fresh tracks seen within the northern fields in the latest imagery indicate that planting will begin shortly.

Other than ground scarring indicating the laying of cables (i.e., electricity or communications) to a guard tower in the western agricultural area, no significant changes are noted in the acres under cultivation during the period under study.

Other Facilities

Aside from the activities and facilities noted above there are three others that are worthy of comment—a small secured compound, two old cemeteries and two air defense sites.

Located within the extreme southwest corner of Camp No. 25's perimeter is a small 25-meter x 25-meter walled compound that was constructed during 2010. Inside the compound is one 14-meter x 9-meter single-story building. Approximately 100-meters to the east is a 14-meter x 6-meter single-story building. The relative isolation of the walled compound within the camp and the fact that it is overlooked by at least five, and possibly as many as eight, guard posts is strongly suggestive of a facility of high importance. The exact purpose of the compound is unclear, however, its size and construction are not consistent with DPRK practices for the storage of heavy equipment or munitions (Figure 5).

With the dramatic expansion of Camp No. 25 during 2009-2010 the perimeter was expanded to include an old

Figure 5, Walled Compound



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cemetery within its northern boundary. Additionally, the southern boundary was extended up to another old cemetery. Neither of these cemeteries exhibits any evidence of activity during the period under study. This suggests that any Camp No. 25 prisoner deaths are dealt with by cremation or burial elsewhere (Figure 6).

Immediately adjacent to Camp No. 25's perimeter are two air defense artillery sites—one to the west and one to the south. The position to the west consists of a battery of six medium-caliber anti-aircraft guns, while the position to the south consists of a battery of eight light-caliber anti-aircraft guns. Both sites consist of headquarters, barracks, support buildings and firing

Figure 6, Old cemetery on north side of Camp No. 25, March 22, 2014.



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positions. While these are well placed to provide

Figure 7, Medium air defense artillery battery position, March 22, 2014.



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protection to Camp No. 25, they are more correctly components of the integrated air defense of Chŏngjin (Figure 7).

Assessment⁴

Analysis of a March 22, 2014 Airbus satellite image of Camp No. 25 and its environs indicates:

- Perimeter walls, fences and gates are well maintained and in good repair, as are the perimeter patrol roads.
- Guard posts are well positioned to provide overlapping fields-of-view of the camp, and are well maintained and in good repair.
- Administrative, barracks, housing, cultural welfare and support buildings and grounds are well maintained and in good repair.
- The grounds and buildings (i.e., wood products factory, light industrial and prisoner housing) of the central compound are well maintained and in good repair.
- There has been no expansion of reported prisoner housing.
- The wood products and light industrial factories appear to be operating, as is evidence by the

⁴ While DPRK internal security organizations and the Korean People's Army are known to employ camouflage, concealment and deception practices to deny outsiders of accurate information, none of significance were detected during the period under study.

presence of vehicles and supplies.

- All agricultural fields are well defined, maintained and irrigated. Numerous greenhouses and fresh tracks seen within the northern fields indicate that planting will begin shortly.
- Significant construction activity has occurred on the banks of the Solgol-chŏn and there are three well-maintained bridges across the stream connecting Camp No. 25 and the village of Susŏng-dong.

When this information is fused with that available in the February 23, 2013 HRNK report covering Camp No. 25 it results in the determination that:

- Camp No. 25 remains operational.
- It is, by DPRK standards, a mature and well-maintained prison facility.
- There have been no significant changes to the physical size, including prisoner housing, of the facility within the last 12 months.
- Prisoner population has likely remained relatively constant.
- The camp maintains a significant administrative, guard and prisoner population.
- The prisoner population is almost certainly employed to both maintain the agricultural fields, orchards and livestock, and to work in the camps wood products and light industrial factories.
- There is likely both an important economic and social relationship between Camp No. 25 and the adjacent villages of Susŏng-dong and Songgong-ni.

Despite extensive satellite imagery coverage of the camp area, it is not presently possible to confirm or deny defector and open-source reports that the camp has a prisoner population of 5,000 persons.

Continued monitoring of Camp No. 25 is recommended to determine its status, develop more conclusive evidence of prisoner population size and assist with the identification of possible human rights abuses.

Gazetteer, References and Author

Gazetteer

Ch'ŏngjin-si	41° 47' 02.81" N	129° 47' 10.26" E
Songgong-ni	41° 50' 37.55" N	129° 42' 55.71" E
Susŏng-dong	41° 49' 38.46" N	129° 44' 08.98" E
Kwan-li-so No. 25 (Camp 25)	41° 50' 00.61" N	129° 43' 34.34" E

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